

Senate Bill No. 232

CHAPTER 142

An act to amend Section 41326 of the Education Code, relating to school accountability.

[Approved by Governor August 7, 2015. Filed with
Secretary of State August 7, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 232, Hall. School accountability: California Collaborative for Educational Excellence: state administrator.

Existing law authorizes the governing board of a school district to request an emergency apportionment through the Superintendent of Public Instruction if the governing board of a school district determines during a fiscal year that its revenues are less than the amount necessary to meet its current year expenditure obligations. Existing law provides that if a school district accepts an emergency apportionment that exceeds an amount equal to 200% of the amount of the reserve recommended for that school district, as specified, the Superintendent must, among other things, assume all the legal rights, duties, and powers of the governing board of the qualifying school district, as defined, and, in consultation with the county superintendent of schools, appoint an administrator to act on the Superintendent's behalf. Existing law authorizes the administrator to take certain actions, including, among others, revising the educational program of the qualifying school district to reflect realistic income projections and pupil performance relative to state standards.

Existing law, on or before July 1, 2014, requires the governing board of each school district and each county board of education to adopt a local control and accountability plan and requires the governing board of each school district and each county board of education to update its local control and accountability plan on or before July 1 of each year. Existing law requires the local control and accountability plan to include certain elements and requires the charter petition for a charter school to include some of those same elements.

Existing law establishes the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence for purposes of advising and assisting school districts, county superintendents of schools, and charter schools in achieving the goals set forth in a local control and accountability plan. Existing law authorizes the Superintendent to direct the collaborative to advise and assist a school district, county superintendent of schools, or charter school in specified circumstances, including upon their request.

This bill would also authorize the state-appointed administrator of a school district to request the advice and assistance of the collaborative.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 41326 of the Education Code is amended to read:

41326. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, the acceptance by a school district of an apportionment made pursuant to Section 41320 that exceeds an amount equal to 200 percent of the amount of the reserve recommended for that school district under the standards and criteria adopted pursuant to Section 33127 constitutes the agreement by the school district to the conditions set forth in this article. Before applying for an emergency apportionment in the amount identified in this subdivision, the governing board of a school district shall discuss the need for that apportionment at a regular or special meeting of the governing board of the school district and, at that meeting, shall receive testimony regarding the apportionment from parents, exclusive representatives of employees of the school district, and other members of the community. For purposes of this article, “qualifying school district” means a school district that accepts a loan as described in this subdivision.

(b) The Superintendent shall assume all the legal rights, duties, and powers of the governing board of a qualifying school district. The Superintendent, in consultation with the county superintendent of schools, shall appoint an administrator to act on his or her behalf in exercising the authority described in this subdivision in accordance with all of the following:

(1) The administrator shall serve under the direction and supervision of the Superintendent until terminated by the Superintendent at his or her discretion. The Superintendent shall consult with the county superintendent of schools before terminating the administrator.

(2) The administrator shall have recognized expertise in management and finance.

(3) To facilitate the appointment of the administrator and the employment of necessary staff, for purposes of this section, the Superintendent is exempt from the requirements of Article 6 (commencing with Section 999) of Chapter 6 of Division 4 of the Military and Veterans Code and Part 2 (commencing with Section 10100) of Division 2 of the Public Contract Code.

(4) Notwithstanding any other law, the Superintendent may appoint an employee of the state or the office of the county superintendent of schools to act as administrator for up to the duration of the administratorship. During the tenure of his or her appointment, the administrator, if he or she is an employee of the state or the office of the county superintendent of schools, is an employee of the qualifying school district, but shall remain in the same retirement system under the same plan that has been provided by his or her employment with the state or the office of the county superintendent of schools. Upon the expiration or termination of the appointment, the employee shall have the right to return to his or her former position, or to a position at substantially the same level as that position, with the state or the office of the county superintendent of schools. The time served in the appointment

shall be counted for all purposes as if the administrator had served that time in his or her former position with the state or the office of the county superintendent of schools.

(5) Except for an individual appointed as an administrator by the Superintendent pursuant to paragraph (4), the administrator shall be a member of the State Teachers' Retirement System, if qualified, for the period of service as administrator, unless he or she elects in writing not to become a member. A person who is a member or retirant of the State Teachers' Retirement System at the time of appointment shall continue to be a member or retirant of the system for the duration of the appointment. If the administrator chooses to become a member or is already a member, the administrator shall be placed on the payroll of the qualifying school district for purposes of providing appropriate contributions to the system. The Superintendent may also require the administrator to be placed on the payroll of the qualifying school district for purposes of remuneration, other benefits, and payroll deductions.

(6) For purposes of workers' compensation benefits, the administrator is an employee of the qualifying school district, except that an administrator appointed pursuant to paragraph (4) may be deemed an employee of the state or office of the county superintendent of schools, as applicable.

(7) The qualifying school district shall add the administrator as a covered employee of the qualifying school district for all purposes of errors and omissions liability insurance policies.

(8) The salary and benefits of the administrator shall be established by the Superintendent and paid by the qualifying school district.

(9) The Superintendent or the administrator may employ, on a short-term basis and at the expense of the qualifying school district, any staff necessary to assist the administrator, including, but not limited to, a certified public accountant.

(10) The administrator may do all of the following:

(A) Implement substantial changes in the fiscal policies and practices of the qualifying school district, including, if necessary, the filing of a petition under Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 901) of Title 11 of the United States Code for the adjustment of indebtedness.

(B) Revise the educational program of the qualifying school district to reflect realistic income projections and pupil performance relative to state standards.

(C) Encourage all members of the school community to accept a fair share of the burden of the fiscal recovery of the qualifying school district.

(D) Consult, for the purposes described in this subdivision, with the governing board of the qualifying school district, the exclusive representatives of the employees of the qualifying school district, parents, and the community.

(E) Consult with, and seek recommendations from, the Superintendent, the county superintendent of schools, and the County Office Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team authorized pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 42127.8 for purposes described in this article.

(F) With the approval of the Superintendent, enter into agreements on behalf of the qualifying school district and, subject to any contractual obligation of the qualifying school district, change existing school district rules, regulations, policies, or practices as necessary for the effective implementation of the recovery plans referred to in Sections 41327 and 41327.1.

(G) Request the advice and assistance of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f) of Section 52074.

(c) (1) Except as provided for in paragraph (2), the period of time during which the Superintendent exercises the authority described in subdivision (b), the governing board of the qualifying school district shall serve as an advisory body reporting to the state-appointed administrator, and has no rights, duties, or powers, and is not entitled to any stipend, benefits, or other compensation from the qualifying school district.

(2) (A) After one complete fiscal year has elapsed following the qualifying school district's acceptance of an emergency apportionment, the governing board of the qualifying school district may conduct an annual advisory evaluation of an administrator for the duration of the administratorship.

(B) An advisory evaluation of an administrator shall focus on the administrator's effectiveness in leading the qualifying school district toward fiscal recovery and improved academic achievement. Advisory evaluation criteria shall be agreed upon by the governing board of the qualifying school district and the administrator before the advisory evaluation. The advisory evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(i) Goals and standards consistent with Section 41327.1.

(ii) Commendations in the areas of the administrator's strengths and achievements.

(iii) Recommendations for improving the administrator's effectiveness in areas of concern and unsatisfactory performance.

(C) An advisory evaluation of an administrator conducted by the governing board of a qualifying school district shall be submitted to the Governor, the Legislature, the Superintendent, and the County Office Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team.

(3) Upon the appointment of an administrator pursuant to this section, the district superintendent is no longer an employee of the qualifying school district.

(4) A determination of the severance compensation for the district superintendent shall be made pursuant to subdivision (j).

(d) Notwithstanding Section 35031 or any other law, the administrator, after according the affected employee reasonable notice and the opportunity for a hearing, may terminate the employment of a deputy, associate, assistant superintendent, or other school district level administrator who is employed by a qualifying school district under a contract of employment signed or renewed after January 1, 1992, if the employee fails to document, to the satisfaction of the administrator, that before the date of the acceptance of

the emergency apportionment he or she either advised the governing board of the qualifying school district, or his or her superior, that actions contemplated or taken by the governing board of the qualifying school district could result in the fiscal insolvency of the qualifying school district, or took other appropriate action to avert that fiscal insolvency.

(e) The authority of the Superintendent, and the administrator, under this section shall continue until all of the following occur:

(1) (A) After one complete fiscal year has elapsed following the qualifying school district's acceptance of an emergency apportionment as described in subdivision (a), the administrator determines, and so notifies the Superintendent and the county superintendent of schools, that future compliance by the qualifying school district with the recovery plans approved pursuant to paragraph (2) is probable.

(B) The Superintendent may return power to the governing board of the qualifying school district for an area listed in subdivision (a) of Section 41327.1 if performance under the recovery plan for that area has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Superintendent.

(2) The Superintendent has approved all of the recovery plans referred to in subdivision (a) of Section 41327 and the County Office Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team completes the improvement plans specified in Section 41327.1 and has completed a minimum of two reports identifying the qualifying school district's progress in implementing the improvement plans.

(3) The administrator certifies that all necessary collective bargaining agreements have been negotiated and ratified, and that the agreements are consistent with the terms of the recovery plans.

(4) The qualifying school district has completed all reports required by the Superintendent and the administrator.

(5) The Superintendent determines that future compliance by the qualifying school district with the recovery plans approved pursuant to paragraph (2) is probable.

(f) When the conditions stated in subdivision (e) have been met, and at least 60 days after the Superintendent has notified the Legislature, the Department of Finance, the Controller, and the county superintendent of schools that he or she expects the conditions prescribed pursuant to this section to be met, the governing board of the qualifying school district shall regain all of its legal rights, duties, and powers, except for the powers held by the trustee provided for pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 41320). The Superintendent shall appoint a trustee under Section 41320.1 to monitor and review the operations of the qualifying school district until the conditions of subdivision (b) of that section have been met.

(g) Notwithstanding subdivision (f), if the qualifying school district violates a provision of the recovery plans approved by the Superintendent pursuant to this article within five years after the trustee appointed pursuant to Section 41320.1 is removed or after the emergency apportionment is repaid, whichever occurs later, or the improvement plans specified in Section 41327.1 during the period of the trustee's appointment, the Superintendent

may reassume, either directly or through an administrator appointed in accordance with this section, all of the legal rights, duties, and powers of the governing board of the qualifying school district. The Superintendent shall return to the governing board of the qualifying school district all of its legal rights, duties, and powers reassumed under this subdivision when he or she determines that future compliance with the approved recovery plans is probable, or after a period of one year, whichever occurs later.

(h) Article 2 (commencing with Section 41320) shall apply except as otherwise specified in this article.

(i) It is the intent of the Legislature that the legislative budget subcommittees annually conduct a review of each qualifying school district that includes an evaluation of the financial condition of the qualifying school district, the impact of the recovery plans upon the qualifying school district's educational program, and the efforts made by the state-appointed administrator to obtain input from the community and the governing board of the qualifying school district.

(j) (1) The district superintendent is entitled to a due process hearing for purposes of determining final compensation. The final compensation of the district superintendent shall be between zero and six times his or her monthly salary. The outcome of the due process hearing shall be reported to the Superintendent and the public. The information provided to the public shall explain the rationale for the compensation.

(2) This subdivision applies only to a contract for employment negotiated on or after June 21, 2004.

(k) (1) When the Superintendent assumes control over a qualifying school district pursuant to subdivision (b), he or she shall, in consultation with the County Office Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, review the fiscal oversight of the qualifying school district by the county superintendent of schools. The Superintendent may consult with other fiscal experts, including other county superintendents of schools and regional fiscal teams, in conducting this review.

(2) Within three months of assuming control over a qualifying school district, the Superintendent shall report his or her findings to the Legislature and shall provide a copy of that report to the Department of Finance. This report shall include findings as to fiscal oversight actions that were or were not taken and may include recommendations as to an appropriate legislative response to improve fiscal oversight.

(3) If, after performing the duties described in paragraphs (1) and (2), the Superintendent determines that the county superintendent of schools failed to carry out his or her responsibilities for fiscal oversight as required by this code, the Superintendent may exercise the authority of the county superintendent of schools who has oversight responsibilities for a qualifying school district. If the Superintendent finds, based on the report required in paragraph (2), that the county superintendent of schools failed to appropriately take into account particular types of indicators of financial distress, or failed to take appropriate remedial actions in the qualifying school district, the Superintendent shall further investigate whether the

county superintendent of schools failed to take into account those indicators, or similarly failed to take appropriate actions in other school districts with negative or qualified certifications, and shall provide an additional report on the fiscal oversight practices of the county superintendent of schools to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of each house of the Legislature and the Department of Finance.

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